

Supplement to Lighthorne Heath Housing Needs Survey October 2004

Introduction

A meeting was held on 9 February 2005 at Elizabeth House to discuss the future use of two sites in Lighthorne Heath for housing to meet local needs. The sites in question are 1.) Land off Leam Road / current SWHA garages, and 2.) Land where the village shop is currently situated. A new doctor's surgery and a new village shop are likely to be provided alongside any new houses. The three issues – housing, surgery and shop - are inextricably linked through South Warwickshire Housing Association being the owner of one piece of land and part owner of the other, and the Association's ownership of both the existing doctor's surgery and shop buildings.

At the meeting concern was raised that the housing needs survey carried out in October 2004 didn't appear to have captured some households known to be living in overcrowded conditions. The question was asked whether or not the survey results could be truly representative of local housing needs in light of this fact.

It was accepted that households living in overcrowded conditions would have been unlikely to complete a housing needs survey form for a variety of reasons. Whilst the methodology of the housing needs survey was thought to be sound, it was felt that a different approach was required to capture the needs of overcrowded households.

The decision was taken to supplement the housing needs survey by means of the Rural Housing Enabler interviewing households thought to be overcrowded. A deadline of 28 February 2005 was set for this.

Methodology

An earlier survey carried out by the Parish Council in conjunction with Lighthorne Heath Primary School had identified 12 households living in overcrowded conditions. This information was used as the starting point for which households the Rural Housing Enabler would interview.

In the week commencing 14 February, representatives of the Parish Council attempted to contact all households identified as being overcrowded to ask whether they would be 'interviewed' ("chatted to"). Several of the households could not be contacted or did not want to be interviewed. Five households responded positively and appointments were made for Sunday 20 February 2005.

To give structure to the interviews a question sheet was formulated along the same lines as the original housing needs survey form. A copy can be seen as Appendix 1.

For each of the interviews the Rural Housing Enabler was accompanied by David Booth - County Councillor, or Louise Giblin - District Councillor and Chairman of Lighthorne Heath Parish Council.

Results

The profile of the 5 households interviewed was as follows:

Household 1

Household members	6 Father Mother Sons (14 and 15 years) Daughters (11 and 17 years)
Current housing circumstances	3 bedroom house rented from a housing association
Local connection	Lived in the parish for 11 years
Urgency of need	Immediate
Special housing needs	None
Tenure (aspired to)	Rent from a housing association
Tenure (reality)	Rent from a housing association
Housing need (type/size)	4 bedroom house
Responded to October 2004 survey	No

Household 2

Household members	6 Father Mother Sons (12 years, 15 years and 20 months) Daughter (8 years)
Current housing circumstances	3 bedroom house rented from a housing association
Local connection	Lived in the parish for 13 years
Urgency of need	Immediate
Special housing needs	None
Tenure (aspired to)	Rent from a housing association
Tenure (reality)	Rent from a housing association
Housing need (type/size)	4 bedroom house
Responded to October 2004 survey	No

Household 3

Household members	9 Father Mother Sons (22, 12 and 9 years) Daughters (16, 15, 10 and 7 years)
Current housing circumstances	3 bedroom house rented from a housing association
Local connection	Lived in the parish for 18 years
Urgency of need	Immediate
Special housing needs	Future mobility problems which may restrict one member of the family to the ground floor
Tenure (aspired to)	Rent from a housing association
Tenure (reality)	Rent from a housing association
Housing need (type/size)	5+ bedroom house
Responded to October 2004 survey	No

Household 4

Household members	5 Father Mother Sons (10 and 12 years) Daughter (13 years)
Current housing circumstances	2 bedroom house rented from a housing association
Local connection	Lived in the parish for 11 years
Urgency of need	Immediate
Special housing needs	None
Tenure (aspired to)	Rent from a housing association
Tenure (reality)	Rent from a housing association
Housing need (type/size)	3 bedroom house
Responded to October 2004 survey	Yes – and counted

Household 5

Household members	5 (6) Father Mother Sons (4, 5 and 9 years) (Baby due soon)
Current housing circumstances	2 bedroom house rented from a housing association
Local connection	Lived in the parish for 9 years
Urgency of need	Immediate
Special housing needs	None
Tenure (aspired to)	Rent from a housing association

Tenure (reality)	Rent from a housing association
Housing need (type/size)	4 bedroom house
Responded to October 2004 survey	No

From the households interviewed, there is a need for:

- 1 x 3 bedroom house to rent from a housing association
- 3 x 4 bedroom houses to rent from a housing association
- 1 x 5+ bedroom house to rent from a housing association

Of the households interviewed:

- All five households expressed support for a housing development for local people based on local needs.
- When asked on which site they would prefer to see the houses being built {SWHA garages or site of village shop}, all 5 households expressed no preference. This was with the caveat that if the village shop site were to be used, appropriate steps would need to be taken to ensure the future of a shop on an alternative site in the village.
- Three of the five households thought the village did not have a good reputation. It was felt this reputation was due to past circumstances and did not reflect the village today.
- All five households thought the village was a nice place to live
- All five households thought the village had a balanced and varied population
- All five households thought the village had a friendly atmosphere and good community spirit.
- None of the five households thought the village had a problem with crime but antisocial behaviour by youths was mentioned as a problem by 4 of the households.
- All five households mentioned the imbalance of housing types and sizes. All five households mentioned the need for additional 3 and 4 bedroom houses.
- When households were asked if they thought there was a lack of facilities, the following comments were noted:
 - ◆ The current bus service is infrequent and has limited destinations
 - ◆ There is a need for somewhere for youths to go, e.g. a drop-in centre
 - ◆ The doctors surgery should be open one or two evenings a week

Conclusions

While the interviews demonstrated a need for 5 new homes, these must be incorporated into the results of the housing needs survey.

One of the households interviewed had already been taken into account in the survey results. This need – for a 3 bedroom house – is therefore not added to the overall list of local needs.

Three of the households with a need for 4 bedroom houses will vacate 3 bedroom houses. These 3 bedroom houses can be reallocated but on the basis that these would be reallocated as per the general housing waiting list and not necessarily to local people, the need for 3 bedroom houses on the overall list of local needs is not reduced.

The household with a need for a 3 bedroom house currently lives in a 2 bedroom house. In theory, this 2 bedroom house could satisfy the need for the 2 bedroom house for shared ownership identified in the housing needs survey. However, because this house is currently rented, not shared ownership, and would be reallocated as per the general housing waiting list, the need for a 2 bedroom house on the overall list of local needs is not reduced.

Following the rules above the full breakdown of local housing need is as follows:

Immediate need

1 x 5+ bedroom house to rent from a housing association
3 x 4 bedroom houses to rent from a housing association
3 x 3 bedroom houses to rent from a housing association
1 x 2 bedroom house for shared ownership from a housing association

Within the next 12 months

1 x 3 bedroom house to rent from a housing association

1 – 2 years time

No needs identified

Over 2 years time

3 x 2 bedroom bungalows/ground floor flats to rent from a housing association
3 x 2 bedroom bungalows to buy on the open market

Recommendation

That a scheme of 15 dwelling units of the tenure, type and size detailed above be provided to meet the local housing needs of Lighthorne Heath.

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- Lighthorne Heath Parish Council
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